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-PRESS RELEASE -

CONNECTICUT'S SMALL BUSINESSES ONE STEP CLOSER TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

BYSIEWICZ APPLAUDS HOUSE PASSAGE

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz is thrilled that today the Connecticut House of Representatives made a strong statement by passing H.B. No. 5536, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership. This bill aims to reduce health care costs to municipalities, small businesses (fewer than fifty employees) and not-for-profits by permitting them to voluntarily join the state employee insurance pool. The bill is now headed to the Senate for further consideration.

"Today, Connecticut moved a major step closer to reigning in sky-rocketing health care costs for small businesses, not-for-profits and municipalities," said Bysiewicz "Lowering health care costs is good for the economy and is good for taxpayers. By expanding the purchasing power of the state pool, we can drive down health care costs for the small business community that is responsible for more than 90% of all new jobs in our state."

"I commend House lawmakers for taking this courageous action and I urge the Senate to pass this thoughtful and effective legislation," Bysiewicz added.

As the state's chief business registrar, Secretary of the State Bysiewicz and the bill's author, House Majority Leader Christopher G. Donovan, have traveled together across Connecticut conducting roundtables for small business owners, elected officials, and not-for-profit organizations.

“Majority Leader Donovan and I share the mutual goal of helping small businesses expand and create more jobs for Connecticut,” said Bysiewicz. “A comprehensive and thoughtful approach to making health insurance more affordable for small businesses would drastically reduce the number of uninsured residents in the State of Connecticut. I commend Majority Leader Donovan, the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership Working Group, and the Labor and Public Employees Committee for their commitment to this critical issue.”

Bysiewicz added, “I would also like to thank the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities for throwing its support to this measure, which will also open up significant cost savings and expand health coverage for thousands of municipal workers throughout our state.”

The Health Insurance Policy Council in its 2007 report “A Framework for Health Care Reform for Connecticut” cites that 52.2% of uninsured workers and dependents are in firms with less than 50 employees which confirms that a large part of Connecticut’s uninsured population is found with small employers.